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10/813,910	03/26/2004	Richard J. Schneider	IGTIP315/AC037	5053

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EXAMINER

LEE, BENJAMIN WILLIAM

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3709

DATE MAILED: 11/28/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/813,910

Applicant(s)

SCHNEIDER, RICHARD J.

Examiner

Benjamin W. Lee

Art Unit

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-62 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-62 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 26 March 2004 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) *
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 3-26-2004; 2-17-2005.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(4) because reference characters "214" in Fig. 5 and "216" in Fig. 2 have both been used to designate "wireless receiver". It appears the reference character "214" for "receiver" in Fig. 5 should be changed to reference character -- 216 --.
2. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(4) because reference character "120" has been used to designate both a "data connector cable" in Fig. 2 and "bill acceptor" in Fig. 3. It appears that reference character "120" designating a "data connector cable" in Fig. 2 should be changed to reference character -- 112 --.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Specification

3. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities:

Page 9, lines 4-5: "The display 162" should be changed to -- The display 142 --.

Page 9, line 20: "key even" is suggested to be changed to -- key event --.

Page 10, lines 23-24: "physical transaction monitor 155" should be changed to
-- physical transaction manager 155 --.

Page 15, line 14: "display 210" should be changed to -- display 212 --.

Page 18, line 16: "system 5" should be changed to -- system 200 --.

Appropriate correction is required.

4. The specification is objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. See 37 CFR 1.75(d)(1) and MPEP § 608.01(o). Correction of the following is required.

Claim 20 recites the limitation "substantially real time." It is unclear what may be considered "substantially real time" and there is no mention of the aforementioned limitation in the specification.

Claims 46-50 recite the limitation "interface card." There is no mention of the aforementioned limitation in the specification.

Claim Objections

5. Claims 6 and 11-25 objected to because of the following informalities:

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Claims 6 and 11-25 recite the limitation “gaming device” in the preambles of the respective claims. Claim 1 recites the limitation “gaming system” in the preamble of the claim. It is suggested to change “gaming device” in the aforementioned claims to -- gaming system --.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

6. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

7. Claim 20 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The limitation “substantially” in line 4 renders the claim indefinite because it is unclear what may be considered “substantially real time.”

Appropriate correction is required.

8. Claims 14, 28, 44, 50, 54, 56, and 57 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 14, 28, 44, 50, 54, 56, and 57 recite the limitation “monetary value used” in line 3, line 2, line 4, line 4, line 2, line 5, and line 6, respectively. The limitation “monetary value used” renders the aforementioned claims indefinite because it is unclear whether “monetary

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value used” encompasses money going into a gaming machine (e.g. “received” and “accepted”), money going out of a gaming machine (e.g. “output” and “paid”), or both money going into and out of the gaming machine.

Appropriate correction is required.

9. Claim 34 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

A claim 34 recites the limitation "the wireless communication system" in line 34. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

10. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

11. Claims 1, 2, 7, 12-14, 21, 23, 25, 26-32, 35-40, 42, 45-48, 51-55, and 58-62, as understood, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Okada (US 5,496,032).

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Re claim 1: Okada discloses a system for managing a gaming hall comprising a gaming device/slot machine 15a1 containing a game to be played by a user (see col. 4, lines 12-14), a value tracker structured to track an amount of monetary value accepted into the gaming device, and to track an amount of monetary value output from the gaming device (see col. 5, lines 48-60), and a warning generating system structured to generate a warning signal based on the amounts tracked by the value tracker (see col. 3, lines 22-30).

Re claims 2 and 7: Okada further discloses the value tracker tracks an amount of tokens accepted into and output from the gaming device (see col. 5, lines 51-54).

Re claim 12: Okada further discloses the value tracker is structured to track jackpots/big bonus/normal bonus/small bonus (see Fig. 6; col. 10, lines 43-52).

Re claims 13-14: Okada further discloses the warning system generates a warning signal based on a comparison of all the monetary value used/accepted into the gaming device and a total of all the monetary value output from the gaming device for a given time period (see col. 3, lines 22-30; col. 8, lines 25-64).

Re claim 21: Okada further discloses the warning signal is generated on a display screen 29 coupled to a gaming network (see Fig. 1; col. 8, lines 45-46).

Re claims 23 and 25: Okada further discloses the value tracker and warning generating system are resident on a network to which the gaming device is coupled (see Fig. 1).

Re claim 26: Okada discloses a gaming system comprising a gaming device/slot machine 15a1 containing a game to be played by a user (see col. 4, lines 12-14), one or more money trackers structured to track an amount of monetary value accepted into the gaming device, and to track an amount of monetary value output from the gaming device (see col. 5, lines 48-60), a data calculation system/local computer 27 coupled to the one or more money trackers, the data calculation system configured to generate a payout warning based on the amount of monetary value accepted into the gaming device and the amount of monetary value output from the gaming device (see col. 3, lines 22-30; col. 5, lines 61-63), and a warning generating system coupled to the data calculation system, the warning generating system configured to generate a warning signal responsive to the payout warning of the data calculation system (see col. 8, lines 33-44).

Re claims 27-29: Okada further discloses the one or more money trackers tracks an amount of tokens accepted into, used by, and output from a gaming device during a time period (see col. 2, lines 39-41; col. 5, lines 51-54, col. 8, lines 49-51).

Re claim 30: Although Okada is silent with respect to the system includes jackpot payouts in the amount of monetary value output from the gaming device, it is believed to be inherent to include jackpot payouts in determining the amount of monetary value output from the gaming device (see Fig. 6; col. 3, lines 22-30; col. 10, lines 14-31).

Re claims 31-32: Okada further discloses the warning signal is a visual signal on the CRT 29 (see Fig. 1; col. 8, lines 45-46) and an audible sound on the buzzer 32 (see Fig. 1; col. 5, lines 7-8).

Re claim 35-36: Okada further discloses the warning signal comprises creating a list of suspect gaming devices (see Fig. 4; col. 8, lines 61-64) and creating an entry in an event log/print out hard copies of the data (see col. 8, lines 15-21).

Re claim 37: Okada further discloses the warning generating system shuts down the gaming device responsive to the payout warning signal (see col. 5, lines 3-7).

Re claim 38: The teachings of Okada as applied to claim 1 have been discussed above. Although Okada is silent with respect to a data transmitter coupled to the warning calculator and structured to transmit the warning signal over a communication network coupled to the gaming device, a data transmitter is believed to be inherent to the invention because the gaming machines are networked (see Fig. 1; col. 4, lines 49-54).

Re claims 39 and 40: Okada further discloses the input counter and output counter are structured to track tokens accepted to and output from a gaming device (see col. 5, lines 51-54).

Re claim 42: Okada further discloses the warning calculator comprises a comparator/computer structured to compare one or more calculated values with one or more predetermined values (see col. 5, lines 61-63; col. 8, lines 25-32).

Re claim 45: Although Okada is silent with respect to a shutdown circuit structured to prevent gameplay when it receives the warning signal, it is believed to be inherent to the invention since the operation of the game machine may be halted by a warning signal (see col. 5, lines 5-7).

Re claim 46: The input counter, output counter, and warning calculator of Okada as applied to claim 38 and claim 1 have been discussed above. Okada further discloses a warning generator (CRT 29, buzzer 32) coupled to the warning calculator structured to generate a warning signal responsive to receiving the payout warning signal (see Fig. 1; col. 5, lines 3-7; col. 8, lines 15-21).

Re claims 47 and 48: Okada further discloses the input counter and output counter tracks tokens accepted into and output from the gaming device (see col. 5, lines 51-54).

Re claim 51: Okada discloses a method for providing an accounting safeguard on a networked game device, comprising recording an amount of monetary value paid by the gaming device (see col. 5, lines 51-54), comparing the amount of monetary value paid by the gaming device to one or more predetermined values (see Fig. 4; col. 5, lines 61-63; col. 8, lines 25-32),

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and issuing a warning if the amount of monetary value paid by the gaming device exceeds the one or more predetermined values (see col. 8, lines 33-44).

Re claim 52: Okada further discloses one of the predetermined values is an amount of monetary value accepted into the gaming device (see col. 10, lines 14-24).

Re claims 53 and 54: Okada further discloses generating one or more predetermined values by tracking tokens accepted/used into the gaming device (see Fig. 2; col. 5, line 61 - col. 6, line 14).

Re claim 55: Okada further discloses recording an amount of monetary value paid by the gaming device comprises recording an amount of tokens paid by the gaming device (col. 5, lines 51-54).

Re claim 58: Okada further discloses issuing a warning if the amount of monetary value paid by the gaming device exceeds the one or more predetermined values comprises when the monetary value paid by the gaming device exceeds the highest of the one or more predetermined values, issuing a first type of warning/abnormality in red (see col. 10, lines 25-31) and when the amount of monetary value paid by the gaming device does not exceed the highest of the one or more predetermined values, but does exceed a second highest of the one or more predetermined values, issuing a second type of warning/abnormality in yellow (see col. 10, lines 25-31).

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Re claim 59: Okada further discloses prohibiting a game on the gaming device from operating if the gaming device issues a warning (see col. 5, lines 3-7).

Re claim 60 and 61: Okada further discloses issuing a warning comprises a visual signal on the CRT 29 (see Fig. 1; col. 8, lines 45-46) and an event log entry/print out hard copies of the data (see col. 8, lines 15-21).

Re claim 62: Okada further discloses transmitting a warning signal over a gaming network. The shut down signal is transmitted over a gaming network (see Fig. 1; col. 5, lines 3-7).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

12. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

13. Claims 3-6 and 8-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okada in view of LeStrange et al. (US 5,470,079).

The teachings of Okada as applied to claim 2 have been discussed above.

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However, Okada fails to disclose or fairly suggest tracking credits or cash equivalents transferred to or from a gaming network, a player account, a physical device, a card, a smartcard, a coupon, or a ticket from or to a gaming device.

LeStrange et al. teaches a game machine accounting and monitoring system that tracks credit cards, smart cards, or other data cards containing credit accounts (see col. 4, line 64 - col. 5, line 5).

Therefore, in view of LeStrange et al., it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the management method for a gaming hall of Okada to include the management and accounting of cashless forms of payment (i.e., credit cards, smart cards, player accounts) in order to encourage more people to use the game machine by providing more convenient payment options.

14. Claims 15-19, 22, 24, 43, 44, 49, 50, 56, and 57, as understood, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okada.

Re claims 15-19: The teachings of Okada as applied to claim 13 have been discussed above.

However, Okada fails to disclose or fairly suggest the time period is resettable, there is more than one time period, one or more time periods can operate concurrently, the time period is one hour or the time period equals a duration of a casino employee work shift.

Okada discloses that the time period is predetermined but implies that the time interval may be different ("for example") (see col. 8, line 66 - col. 9, line 5).

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Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to make the time period resettable, alter the duration of the time period, or add multiple concurrent time periods in order to provide adjust to varying amounts of use (i.e. reset the time period to continuously monitor over consecutive time periods, shorter time periods for heavy use, longer time periods for light use, multiple concurrent time periods for widely varied use).

Re claims 22 and 24: The teachings of Okada as applied to claim 1 have been discussed above.

However, Okada fails to disclose or fairly suggest the value tracker or warning generating system is resident on the gaming device.

It is well known in the art to move the functionality of systems to different components since many computing systems are general purpose.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to move the value tracker and warning generating system onto the gaming device in order to reduce the number of separate devices.

Re claims 43-44: The teachings of Okada as applied to claim 38 have been discussed above.

However, Okada fails to disclose or fairly suggest the comparison between the monetary value generated and the monetary value accepted/used is a simple subtraction.

It is well known in the art to monitor the net flow of monetary value in gaming with a simple subtraction.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to replace the ratio calculation of Okada with a simple subtraction in order to reduce the workload on a microprocessor.

Re claims 49 and 50: The teachings of Okada as applied to claim 46 have been discussed above.

However, Okada fails to disclose or fairly suggest the comparison between the monetary value generated and the monetary value accepted/used is a simple subtraction.

It is well known in the art to monitor the net flow of monetary value in gaming with a simple subtraction.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to replace the ratio calculation of Okada with a simple subtraction in order to reduce the workload on a microprocessor.

Re claims 56 and 57: The teachings of Okada as applied to claim 51 have been discussed above. Okada further discloses comparing the amount of monetary value paid by the gaming device to one or more predetermined values comprises obtaining the amount of monetary value paid by the gaming device (see col. 5, lines 51-54) and comparing a value obtained from a calculation to one or more predetermined values (see col. 5, lines 61-63; col. 8, lines 25-32)

However, Okada fails to disclose or fairly suggest the comparison between the monetary value generated and the monetary value accepted/used is a simple subtraction.

It is well known in the art to monitor the net flow of monetary value in gaming with a simple subtraction.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to replace the ratio calculation of Okada with a simple subtraction in order to reduce the workload on a microprocessor.

15. Claim 20 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okada in view of Solomon (US 2004/0033832 A1).

The teachings of Okada as applied to claim 1 have been discussed above.

However, Okada fails to disclose or fairly suggest the value tracker is structured to track the amount of monetary value accepted into the gaming device, and the amount of monetary value output from the gaming device in real time.

Solomon discloses monitoring money instruments on a game by game basis in real time (see ¶ [0010], lines 5-8).

Therefore, in view of Solomon, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to adapt the system of Okada to function in real time in order to increase the probability of detecting problems early.

16. Claims 33 and 34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okada in view of Oles et al. (US 2003/0060280 A1).

The teachings of Okada as applied to claim 26 have been discussed above.

However, Okada fails to disclose or fairly suggest the warning signal is transmitted on a wireless communication system or a plurality of radios monitoring the same frequency.

Oles et al. teaches a casino money handling system with a gaming machine networked to a control station. Oles et al. further discloses the link may be wired or wireless and cites the IEEE 802.11b wireless standard as an example (see ¶ [0062]). An IEEE 802.11b wireless network contains a plurality of radios monitoring the same frequency.

Therefore, in view of Oles et al., it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to replace the wired optical connection between the local computer and gaming machine of Okada with a wireless IEEE 802.11b wireless network in order to reduce the number of wires necessary in the system. The warning signal would be transmitted wireless from the local computer to the gaming machine in order to halt operation.

17. Claim 41 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okada in view of Kloss et al. (US 5,531,309).

The teachings of Okada as applied to claim 38 have been discussed above.

However, Okada fails to disclose or fairly suggest the warning calculator is structured to omit one or more transactions of monetary value generated by the gaming device when determining whether to generate the payout warning signal.

Kloss et al. discloses a coin acceptor in a gaming machine that discards transactions involving invalid coins (see col. 4, lines 21-29).

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Therefore, in view of Kloss et al., it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time to add the coin acceptor of Kloss et al. to the gaming machine of Okada in order to remove invalid coin transactions from the process of determining whether to generate the payout warning signal.

Conclusion

18. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Bell et al. discloses a method for meeting IRS reporting requirements related to electronic gaming machines. Johnson discloses a safe gaming system. Shito discloses a game monitoring system.

19. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Benjamin W. Lee whose telephone number is 571-270-1346. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon - Thurs (7:30AM-5PM), or Alt. Fri (7:30AM-4PM).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jong-Suk (James) Lee can be reached on 571-272-7044. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/bwl
Benjamin W. Lee
November 21, 2006


KIM NGUYEN
PRIMARY EXAMINER